

Linchfield Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120499
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380044
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Lynne Blakelock

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Henderson
Headteacher	Simon Chandler
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
School address	Crowson Way Deeping St James Peterborough PE6 8EY
Telephone number	01778 347450
Fax number	01778 341862
Email address	enquiries@linchfield.lincs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	3–4 July 2012
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M1 2WD

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Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock

Additional Inspector

Linda Baily

Additional Inspector

Andrew Read

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 15 teachers in 24 lessons, over approximately 12 hours. They held meetings with a group of pupils, representatives of the governing body and with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation ranging from the achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school and samples of their work to improvement planning and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They analysed the 134 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a very large school, compared to others of its type. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.

The school has experienced several recent changes in senior leadership. After a term as the interim post-holder, the headteacher was appointed permanently in January 2011. The deputy headteacher took up his post in September 2011.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 1 achieve well. However, the school is not yet good because pupils' achievement throughout Key Stage 2 is only satisfactory. Monitoring of the school's provision and performance by leaders is not comprehensive enough to ensure an accurate picture of provision, performance and needs in all subjects. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children make good progress in Reception and in Key Stage 1, from their individual starting points. In Key Stage 2, progress is variable between year groups and satisfactory overall. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing activities from Reception onwards are not regularly planned to promote literacy skills across different subjects.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in Reception and Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 because there are considerable variations in teaching between year groups and classes. The main issue restricting progress is that activities do not match accurately enough the levels at which pupils work, particularly for those with the potential to achieve higher levels for their age. Pupils enjoy assessing their own learning but teachers' marking of their work does not regularly tell them the next steps to take.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. A few pupils disrupt learning and other pupils' enjoyment of it. However, many pupils are an absolute credit to the school in their attitudes to learning and each other. Most pupils feel safe in school.
- The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning, which is evident particularly in younger year groups. The curriculum, including information and communication technology (ICT), has not been reviewed recently to ascertain

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its impact on learning, beyond that of literacy and numeracy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards across the school, through teaching that is consistently good, by making sure that:
 - activities are an accurate match to the levels at which pupils work, especially for pupils capable of reaching higher levels for their age
 - activities to promote writing from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards are planned carefully to promote literacy skills across the planned curriculum.
 - marking very regularly informs pupils of the next steps to take to promote further progress.

- Strengthen the impact of the work of senior and middle leaders by ensuring that:
 - the roles and responsibilities of leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility are extended so that they have a comprehensive understanding of provision, performance and needs in their areas
 - the curriculum, including ICT, is reviewed and its impact on learning beyond literacy and numeracy is monitored regularly.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children make good progress in Reception from levels of knowledge and skills typical for their age when they start school. Activities provide many interesting opportunities for learning. The children were fascinated by a moth that they found and the teacher promoted their curiosity and learning about the world around them by telling them about the life cycles of moths and their nocturnal habits. The wide range of activities ensures that the children are practising their speaking skills all day. Opportunities for the children to build their writing skills are not incorporated into other learning regularly enough. This is so throughout the school. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength, through practising negotiating with others and taking their needs and preferences into account.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. They reach above average levels of attainment, including in reading. Many read words accurately and independently and read with expression and meaning. The new reading strategy is promoting greater continuity of learning. In a numeracy lesson in Year 1, the stimulus of the journey of the Olympic torch resulted in pupils' excellent progress in understanding the value of different digits in solving problems.

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Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 because of variation in the quality of teaching, aggravated by some instability in staffing over time and previous gaps in pupils' learning. Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and data point to a growing proportion of pupils achieving higher levels for their age. The school provides significant levels of intervention to minimise the impact of inconsistent teaching over time and this has been effective in raising standards. There is some stronger teaching; in a Year 5 class, for example, pupils made good progress in using images to produce vivid and ambitious vocabulary.

All groups, including those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, generally make progress at a similar rate. The progress of pupils capable of reaching higher levels is more variable due to inconsistencies in the quality of planning to match their needs, particularly in writing. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable become more confident in themselves and their ability, due to sensitive support. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, aided by good resources to match their specific needs. In a Year 4 support group, pupils wrote expressively, adding descriptive phrases and being able to read them back.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children make good progress. Inspectors found that this was the case in Reception and Key Stage 1, but that progress was satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

Common strengths in teaching are the good relationships between staff and pupils and a clear purpose to learning. Increasingly, lessons have an interesting beginning that holds pupils' attention. Very short excerpts of a film about the evacuation of children during war time, for example, provided a poignant stimulus for pupils' writing as well as promoting empathy for the evacuees' feelings and how pupils would react in their place.

Most parents and carers state that teaching is good and in Reception and Key Stage 1 overall it is. While children in Reception enjoy outdoor learning, this is not always fully developed in lesson planning. The major barrier to good progress in Key Stage 2 is often an inaccuracy of challenge in the work given to pupils, especially for those capable of reaching higher levels of attainment. Where teaching is stronger, effective questioning, a brisk pace, and effective endings to lessons contribute to pupils' good learning. However, too often in Key Stage 2, there is inconsistency in these practices between lessons and subjects, and pupils' progress is no better than satisfactory.

The teaching of reading is good. Daily and systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in Reception and Key Stage 1 gives pupils a good start in developing their understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds and in applying it in writing and spelling. This work is consolidated in Key Stage 2.

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Learning support staff provide unobtrusive and well-targeted support. This was demonstrated by step-by-step teaching of a group of lower ability Year 1 pupils, in partitioning tens and units up to 20.

Marking of pupils' work regularly tells pupils what they have achieved. Less regularly, it tells them the next steps to make in their learning. The inspectors saw good development in most classes of pupils assessing their own work and that of their peers. Pupils have targets but during the inspection they were not a focus in learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Although many pupils are very sensible all the time and learning flows, behaviour is no better than satisfactory overall because of the inattention of a few pupils, who attempt to distract others in lessons. A large majority of the parents and carers and pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that behaviour is good. Almost all those who disagreed had children in a class where serious behavioural issues have been identified and where concerted steps are being taken to manage the behaviour of those pupils.

In most classes and in the playground, from Reception onwards, pupils co-operate well in working and playing in pairs and groups. Attendance is above average over a sustained period.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that their children feel safe in school. Pupils also think that the school keeps them safe. They say that the staff give them the skills to deal with different types of unpleasantness. There are a very few recordings of racist name-calling, about which pupils say that firm and prompt action is taken. Pupils' awareness of potentially unsafe situations, including internet bullying, is a developing aspect.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides a clear direction to the school's work and has established good systems to monitor its performance. Goals are well defined and supported by the very committed staff. There is a major focus on improving the quality of teaching, which is reflected in school improvement planning and performance management targets. The inspection confirmed the accuracy of the school's judgements of teaching. Professional-development links with an outstanding school and with the local authority have resulted in greater consistency in teaching practices, leading to pupils' good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The impact of this work has not been so marked upon the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. The move to working in key stage teams, under phase leaders, has brought about a sharper focus on monitoring the rate of progress in each year group. It has also ensured that staff take greater responsibility for using data and are held fully accountable for pupils' progress. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and ensures pupils are free from discrimination.

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All pupils have opportunities to develop wider skills, such as participating in school activities and taking on responsibilities around the school.

The impact of leaders and managers at all levels is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy leaders have a good understanding of the rate of progress in their subjects through data and a clear understanding of how to develop their areas. However, they do not all have enough of a monitoring role, including of the quality of teaching in their subjects, to determine the quality of provision and performance and to address any needs. The curriculum has not been reviewed recently and although monitoring of literacy and numeracy is established and provision is checked regularly, this is not the case in most other subjects, such as ICT. The curriculum is built around literacy, numeracy and topics with increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills across a range of subjects. Planning for this is not consistently promoting specific literacy skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily, but again, planning is not specific enough to ensure comprehensive and progressive coverage. There is a varied range of after-school clubs.

A range of inspection evidence demonstrates the very probing questioning and challenge of the governing body, and their capacity to help to steer the school further forward. The governors conscientiously oversee arrangements for safeguarding, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements.

Parents and carers support the school's work, with most feeling well informed due to regular communication between home and school. Parents' forums, which incorporate workshops on letters and sounds and numeracy, and informative termly newsletters, enable them to support their children's learning more meaningfully.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Linchfield Community School, Peterborough, PE6 8EY

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for your helpfulness during our recent visit. We enjoyed talking with you and learnt a lot from watching you learning and playing, listening to you reading and hearing your views about your school. They contributed to the judgements that we have made.

Your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education. You make good progress in Reception and in Key Stage 1 where teaching is consistently good. Your progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, you reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Your attendance is above average, and many of you behave well. However, a few pupils occasionally cause distraction through inappropriate behaviour. You like learning through topics and working together to discuss and review your learning.

Your headteacher is keen for the school to improve. In order for this to happen, we have asked him to:

- make sure that teaching is consistently good across the school
- ensure that the activities you are given are a very close match to your needs, particularly for those of you who can reach higher levels
- provide more opportunities for you to write and to practise a range of literacy skills in other subjects
- review the curriculum, including ICT, and monitor the impact of learning in all areas.

I hope that you will all support the staff in carrying out these improvements by behaving well all of the time and taking your teachers' advice.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead Inspector

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